

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 060

INFO AMEMBASSY SEOUL

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 2177

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, KS, JA

SUBJECT: FURTHER REVERBERATIONS OF KIM CASE

SUMMARY: WHILE KIM CASE HAS FADED FROM PUBLIC ATTENTION IN JAPAN, FONOFF BELIEVES IT COULD REAPPEAR AS SIGNIFICANT ISSUE IN DIET AND PRESS, PARTICULARLY IF ROKG MAKES DEFINITIVE DECISION NOT TO RELEASE KIM, CONTRARY TO ROKG-GOJ UNDERSTANDING OF NOVEMBER 1973. END SUMMARY

1. DURING GENERAL REVIEW WITH EMBOFF OF JAPAN-KOREAN RELATIONS, FONOFF NORTHEAST ASIA DIV HEAD SEO DESCRIBED CURRENT JAPANESE ATTITUDES, AND GOJ POLICY, ON CASE OF KIM TAE JUNG.

2. SEO RECALLED THAT FRICTIION BETWEEN GOJ AND ROKG ON THIS ISSUE HAD BEEN RESOLVED ON NOVEMBER 2, 1973, WHEN ROKG PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED THAT KIM, AFTER NECESSARY INVESTIGATIONS HAD BEEN COMPLETED, WOULD BE FREE, INCLUDING FREEDOM TO TRAVEL ABROAD AS KOREAN CITIZEN. SEO NOTED THAT KIM HAS NOT YET BEEN PERMITTED TO DEPART FOR HARVARD AS HAD BEEN EXPECTED AND FONOFF, VERY WARY OF EMBARRASSING QUESTIONS IN DIET, HAD ASKED ROKG ON FEB. 13 FOR QTE CLARIFICATION UNQTE. REPLY HAD CONFIDENTIAL

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BEEN THAT ROKG POSITION IS UNCHANGED: KIM WILL BE

FREE TO GO ABROAD UNDER TERMS OF KOREAN LAW, BUT THAT HIS QTE QUALIFICATIONS UNQTE ARE STILL BEING EXAMINED. SEO COMMENTED THAT FONOFF HAD UNDERSTOOD, WHEN COMPROMISE WAS STRUCK LAST NOVEMBER, THAT PROCESS OF QTE INVESTIGATION UNQTE WOULD BE DRAWN OUT BECAUSE IT INVOLVES SEVERAL MINISTRIES AND AGENCIES. STILL, KIM HAS BEEN WAITING THREE MONTHS FOR VISA.

3. FONOFF VIEW IS THAT, IN LIGHT OF EMERGENCY RESTRICTIONS ANNOUNCED JAN. 8, IT IS MOST UNLIKELY KIM WILL BE PERMITTED TO DEPART. IF ROKG SHOULD PUBLICLY ANNOUNCE THIS DECISION, FONOFF EXPECTS SERIOUS DIFFICULTIES IN DIET, SINCE GOJ WILL BE ACCUSED OF EITHER COLLUSION WITH ROKG OR BEING DUPED BY THEM. FONOFF IS THEREFORE HOPING THAT ROKG WILL KEEP CASE UNDER REVIEW RATHER THAN ANNOUNCE ANY NEGATIVE DECISION. SEO ADDED THAT IF QUESTION SHOULD ARISE IN DIET, GOJ WILL CERTAINLY MAKE KNOWN ITS FEB. 13 APPROACH TO ROKG.

4. COMMENT: KIM CASE HAS VIRTUALLY DISAPPEARED FROM PUBLIC ATTENTION. HOWEVER, OPPOSITION HAS ALWAYS CONSIDERED KOREAN ISSUES AS CONVENIENT WEAPONS WITH WHICH TO BELABOR GOJ AND THEREFORE, AS SEO INDICATED, ANY FINAL NEGATIVE DECISION BY ROKG WOULD GENERATE REACTION.
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